

Message Text

PAGE 01 STATE 074861
ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 SIG-03 SSM-03
SSO-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-01 SS-15 SP-02 PM-05
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PAGE 02 STATE 074861

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TEL AVIV ACKNOWLEDGE

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: BACKGROUND BRIEFING ON BEGIN'S WASHINGTON TALKS -
MARCH 22, 1978

1. FOLLOWING IS THE TRANSCRIPT OF A BACKGROUND BRIEFING
GIVEN AT THE WHITE HOUSE FOR THE PRESS ATTRIBUTABLE TO
"ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS." FYI ONLY: THE OFFICIAL
WHO GAVE THE BRIEFING WAS ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON.

2. BEGIN TEXT:

THIS BRIEFING MAY BE ATTRIBUTED TO ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS

MR. POWELL: THIS BRIEFING WILL BE ON BACKGROUND. IT WILL
BE FOR ATTRIBUTION TO ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS OR OFFICIAL,
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PAGE 03 STATE 074861

AS YOU WISH. THAT IS ALL I HAVE TO SAY.

Q. IS THERE GOING TO BE A COMMUNIQUE?

MR. POWELL: I WILL LET THE BRIEFER DEAL WITH THAT.

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: THERE WILL BE A FURTHER STATEMENT
ISSUED LATER. IT MAY WELL NOT BE UNTIL TOMORROW MORNING,

IT MIGHT BE THIS EVENING--PROBABLY TOMORROW MORNING. AND
I SUSPECT THAT IS THE MOST LIKELY TIMING.

Q. AN AMERICAN STATEMENT?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: IT WILL BE BASICALLY AN AMERICAN
STATEMENT.

Q. WHAT IS TAKING SO LONG?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: BUT THE PRESIDENT HAS ALREADY,
OF COURSE, MADE A STATEMENT TODAY IN HIS FAREWELL REMARKS
TO THE PRIME MINISTER. IT WILL BE SUPPLEMENTARY TO THAT.
BUT MEANWHILE, WE THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE USEFUL TO GIVE A
LITTLE BIT OF A FILL-IN ON THE TALKS THAT HAVE TAKEN
PLACE UP UNTIL NOW.

AS YOU KNOW, THE PRESIDENT AND THE PRIME MINISTER HAD SOME PRIVATE TIME TOGETHER LAST NIGHT. THEN THERE WAS A MEETING IN THE CABINET ROOM THIS MORNING, WITH ADVISORS, SENIOR ADVISORS PRESENT ON BOTH SIDES; DURING THE COURSE OF WHICH THE PRESIDENT AND THE PRIME MINISTER REVIEWED FOR US THE ESSENCE OF THEIR TALKS THE NIGHT BEFORE.

LET ME JUST SAY A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE TALKS TODAY AND CHARACTERIZE THEM FOR YOU. FIRST OF ALL, THE TALKS WERE CONDUCTED AS WE SAID YESTERDAY AND I WOULD REITERATE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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PAGE 04 STATE 074861

TODAY, IN A SERIOUS AND CANDID WAY, IN THE SPIRIT OF THE FRIENDSHIP THAT IS TRADITIONAL BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES.

THE TWO PRINCIPALS CONTINUED TODAY AS THEY BEGAN YESTERDAY, REVIEWING THE WORK THAT HAS BEEN DONE ON THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES GOVERNING A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT. THIS WAS ALSO COVERED INCONSIDERABLE DETAIL IN THE MEETINGS THAT THE SECRETARY OF STATE HAD WITH FOREIGN MINISTER DAYAN, BOTH YESTERDAY AFTERNOON AND IN A MEETING OF ABOUT AN HOUR'S DURATION AFTER THE MEETING BETWEEN THE SECRETARY AND THE PRIME MINISTER AT THE STATE DEPARTMENT THIS NOON.

THE PRESIDENT, IN THESE TALKS, REAFFIRMED THE BASIC PRINCIPLES THAT HAVE GOVERNED THE AMERICAN MIDDLE EAST POLICY OVER THE YEARS, REEMPHASIZING AND AFFIRMING THE COMMITMENT OF THE UNITED STATES TO A COMPREHENSIVE JUST AND LASTING MIDDLE EAST PEACE, WHICH, AS WE HAVE SAID MANY TIMES, SHOULD BE EMBODIED IN PEACE TREATIES AND SHOULD ALSO PROVIDE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NORMAL PEACEFUL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE PARTIES.

THE PRESIDENT ALSO AGAIN REITERATED OUR VIEW THAT THE BASIS FOR A SETTLEMENT REMAINS SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 242, THAT ALL OF THE PRINCIPLES OF THAT RESOLUTION MUST BE THE BASIS FOR THE SETTLEMENT AND THAT ALL OF THOSE PRINCIPLES MUST APPLY ON ALL FRONTS OF THE CONFLICT.

THOSE PRINCIPLES, AS I AM SURE YOU ALL WELL KNOW BY THIS TIME, INCLUDE THE PRINCIPLE OF ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM TERRITORIES OCCUPIED IN 1967, AND THE RIGHT OF EVERY STATE IN THE AREA TO LIVE IN PEACE WITHIN SECURE AND RECOGNIZED BOUNDARIES.

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PAGE 05 STATE 074861

THE PRESIDENT ALSO REITERATED AND REAFFIRMED THAT THE

UNITED STATES REMAINS DEDICATED TO THE SECURITY OF ISRAEL,
THAT THE CLOSE TIES OF FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN OUR TWO

COUNTRIES HAVE ALWAYS BEEN, AND WILL REMAIN, A FUNDAMENTAL
POINT OF AMERICAN POLICY. AND FINALLY, THE PRESIDENT
AGAIN AFFIRMED OUR VIEW THAT THERE CAN BE NO PEACE
SETTLEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST WITHOUT A RESOLUTION OF THE
PALESTINIAN QUESTION.

WITH REGARD TO THE NEGOTIATIONS THAT HAVE BEEN UNDER WAY
IN RECENT MONTHS BETWEEN EGYPT AND ISRAEL--IN WHICH WE
HAVE BEEN PLAYING, RECENTLY, A MIDDLEMAN ROLE--THE
PRESIDENT ELABORATED ON OUR VIEWS IN TWO PRINCIPAL
RESPECTS: FIRST OF ALL, THAT WE STAND READY TO WORK IN
OUR EFFORTS IN THESE NEGOTIATIONS TO ASSURE THAT THERE
ARE ADEQUATE SOLUTIONS TO THE VERY REAL SECURITY PROBLEMS
THAT ISRAEL WOULD FACE IN THE CONTEXT OF A PEACE SETTLE-
MENT INVOLVING WITHDRAWAL FROM OCCUPIED TERRITORIES.

WE HAVE EMPHASIZED OUR VIEW, AS WE HAVE IN TALKS WITH
ARAB LEADERS, THAT AGREEMENTS AND PEACE TREATIES BETWEEN
THE PARTIES MUST INCLUDE PROVISIONS THAT WILL PERMANENTLY
PROTECT ISRAEL'S SECURITY INTERESTS.

AND SECONDLY, WITH REGARD TO THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE, THE
PRESIDENT AGAIN REAFFIRMED OUR VIEWS IN THE TERMS OF THE
STATEMENT THAT HE MADE WHEN HE MET WITH PRESIDENT SADAT
IN ASWAN IN EARLY JANUARY OF THIS YEAR; NAMELY, THAT THERE
MUST BE A RESOLUTION OF THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM IN ALL ITS
ASPECTS, WHICH RECOGNIZES THE LEGITIMATE RIGHTS OF THE
PALESTINIAN PEOPLE AND WHICH ENABLES THE PALESTINIANS TO
PARTICIPATE IN THE DETERMINATION OF THEIR OWN FUTURE.

IN GOING INTO SOME DETAIL ABOUT THIS ASPECT, WHICH, AS WE
HAVE SAID BEFORE, IS ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT, UNRESOLVED
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PAGE 06 STATE 074861

ISSUES IN THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES, THERE WAS
CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSION OF HOW SUCH PRINCIPLES MIGHT
APPLY IN TERMS OF FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS, AND IN PARTICULAR,
FUTURE INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE WEST BANK AND GAZA.

THERE WAS SOME DISCUSSION, ALSO, OF THE STATUS OF THE
NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN EGYPT AND ISRAEL WITH REGARD

TO THE NEGOTIATIONS THAT HAD BEEN GOING ON IN THE MILITARY
COMMITTEE ON BILATERAL EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI MATTERS AND SOME
REVIEW OF WAYS IN WHICH PROGRESS IN THOSE TALKS MIGHT BE
MADE.

AT THE END OF THE TALKS TODAY, THE PRESIDENT AND THE

PRIME MINISTER AGREED THAT THEY WOULD REMAIN IN CLOSE PERSONAL TOUCH, BOTH THROUGH THE KINDS OF DIRECT COMMUNICATIONS THAT THEY EXCHANGE FROM TIME TO TIME, AND THROUGH REGULAR DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS. AND THE PRESIDENT, OF COURSE, REAFFIRMED THAT THE UNITED STATES IS GOING TO CONTINUE TO SUPPORT AND ASSIST IN EVERY WAY THE CONTINUING EFFORTS TOWARDS A COMPREHENSIVE MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT.

I THINK PERHAPS THAT GIVES YOU THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE TALKS. I SUSPECT THERE MAY STILL BE SOME QUESTIONS THAT I HAVEN'T COVERED.

Q. SEVERAL TIMES IN THESE DISCUSSIONS THE LANGUAGE REGARDING GUARANTEES FOR ISRAEL, REPEATED REFERENCES TO MEASURES TO PROTECT THE SECURITY OF ISRAEL PERMANENTLY, AND SO FORTH, HAVE COME UP SEEMINGLY TO ME, UNDER A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT CONTEXT THAN IN THE PAST. IS THERE ANY U.S. IDEA TO PROVIDE A NEW FORM OF GUARANTEES? IS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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PAGE 07 STATE 074861

THERE A NEW ELEMENT IN THIS IN ANY WAY?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: NO, I WOULD NOT SAY THIS IS A NEW ELEMENT. I WOULD SAY THAT WE HAVE SIMPLY TRIED TO HIGHLIGHT THE IMPORTANCE THAT WE ATTACH AND THAT WE HAVE BEEN CONVEYING IN OUR TALKS WITH THE ARAB GOVERNMENTS, THAT WE BELIEVE THEY SHOULD ATTACH TO THIS ASPECT, TO THE SECURITY ASPECTS OF A PEACE SETTLEMENT INVOLVING VERY DIFFICULT QUESTIONS OF WITHDRAWAL.

BUT THERE HAS BEEN NO ASPECT DISCUSSED THAT HAS NOT BEEN DISCUSSED AT SOME POINT IN THE TALKS IN THE PAST.

Q. WHEN ISRAEL RESPONDED TO PRESIDENT SADAT'S INITIATIVE WITH AN OPENING PROPOSAL THAT INCLUDED GIVING BACK 99 PERCENT OF THE SINAI AND TAKING UP VARIOUS OTHER MEASURES, THE UNITED STATES, VARIOUS OFFICIALS, WELCOMED THIS, CALLED IT CONSTRUCTIVE, NOTABLE, FAR-REACHING AND MR. BEGIN REMINDED US ALL OF THOSE DESCRIPTIONS OUT THERE TODAY.

IS THE UNITED STATES WITHDRAWING ITS POSITIVE REACTION TO THOSE ISRAELI PROPOSALS AT THIS POINT? HAVE YOU CHANGED YOUR MIND ABOUT THEM?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: OUR REACTION WAS STATED AT THE TIME. LET ME ONLY SAY THAT WE AGAIN HAVE MADE CLEAR THAT WE CONSIDER THAT THE PROPOSALS THAT ISRAEL HAS MADE IN THE CONTEXT OF PRESIDENT SADAT'S PEACE INITIATIVE ARE, IN OUR VIEW, A GOOD STARTING POINT FOR NEGOTIATIONS, A FAIR BASIS

FOR NEGOTIATIONS.

THEY ARE NOT IN THEMSELVES, OBVIOUSLY, THE FINAL ANSWER.
I THINK ISRAEL ITSELF RECOGNIZED THIS WHEN IT SAID THAT
IT WELCOMED COUNTERPROPOSALS TO THESE PROPOSALS.

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PAGE 08 STATE 074861

Q. CAN YOU SAY WHAT HAPPENS NEXT? ARE YOU GOING BACK
TO THE AREA? IS THERE GOING TO BE A REVIEW HERE IN
WASHINGTON FIRST? AND WHAT IS THE STATE OF RELATIONS
NOW BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND ISRAEL? IS THERE A
DEADLOCK? IS THERE A CRISIS? HOW DO YOU DESCRIBE IT?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I WOULD CERTAINLY NOT SAY CRISIS.
I THINK IT IS CLEAR THAT THERE REMAIN DIFFERENCES IN
APPROACHES TO SOME OF THE FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES IN THE
NEGOTIATIONS.

AS TO HOW WE PROCEED FROM HERE, THERE WILL BE, IN THE
FIRST INSTANCE, CONSULTATIONS AMONG OURSELVES TO TAKE
STOCK NOW OF WHERE WE ARE AT THE END OF THESE TALKS.
THERE WILL HAVE TO BE CONSULTATIONS WITH THE OTHER
PRINCIPAL PARTY TO THE NEGOTIATIONS, NAMELY, THE GOVERNMENT
OF EGYPT, AND CONTINUING CONSULTATIONS AS WELL THROUGH
DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL.

OUT OF THIS FOLLOW-ON PROCESS OF CONSULTATIONS WE EXPECT
WILL COME DECISIONS ABOUT THE MOST PRACTICAL AND EFFECTIVE
WAY TO PROCEED, BUT NO PRECISE DECISIONS HAVE BEEN MADE
AT THE PRESENT TIME ABOUT WHAT THOSE STEPS MIGHT BE.

Q. I JUST WANTED TO FIND OUT IF PRIME MINISTER BEGIN HERE
REPEATED WHAT AN ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL SAID A WEEK OR SO
AGO, HAD BEEN TOLD TO A SHUTTLING ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL;
THAT HE IN FACT DID NOT BELIEVE THAT 242 APPLIES TO THE
WEST BANK.

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: THIS REMAINS, I THINK, CLEARLY
ONE OF THE POINTS OF DIFFERENCE THAT REMAINS TO BE OVER-
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PAGE 09 STATE 074861

PRINCIPLE OF WITHDRAWAL, AS WELL AS THE OTHER PRINCIPLES
OF RESOLUTION 242, TO THE WEST BANK.

Q. COULD YOU TELL US WHAT THE ISRAELI POSITION IS ON IT,
AS YOU UNDERSTAND IT?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I THINK THAT IT IS BETTER, FRANKLY, TO GET THAT FROM THE ISRAELIS. I THINK THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE STATEMENT MADE OF THAT IS THE ONE THAT DAYAN MADE IN THE KNESSET NOT TOO LONG BEFORE THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT HERE.

Q. ARE YOU STILL GOING BACK TO THE MIDDLE EAST ON THE 1ST OF APRIL?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I NEVER HAD A PLAN TO GO BACK ON THE 1ST OF APRIL. THAT IS APRIL FOOL'S DAY. I DON'T KNOW HOW THAT GOT AROUND. I FULLY EXPECT THAT AT SOME POINT AS PART OF THE PROCESS, WHICH GOES ON IN A NUMBER OF WAYS IN A NUMBER OF LEVELS, THAT IT WILL GO ON AT MY LEVEL AND THAT I WILL AT SOME POINT GO BACK. BUT THERE IS NO DECISION MADE AT THE PRESENT TIME ABOUT WHEN.

Q. DIDN'T THE WAR IN LEBANON COME UP AT ALL, THE INVASION, THE MASSIVE INVASION, USE OF AMERICAN PLANES AND EQUIPMENT TO ATTACK ANOTHER COUNTRY?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: THE SITUATION IN LEBANON DID NOT COME UP IN THE TALKS BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE PRESIDENT TODAY. IT WAS DISCUSSED BETWEEN THE SECRETARY AND THE PRIME MINISTER DURING THEIR FOLLOW-ON MEETING. THERE WAS SOME DISCUSSION OF THE SITUATION IN LEBANON. IT WAS FOCUSED MOSTLY ON SIMPLY A REVIEW OF THE STATUS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LATEST SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS WITH REGARD TO ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL AND THE INTRODUCTION OF UNITED NATIONS FORCES AND THE RESTORATION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 10 STATE 074861

OF THE AUTHORITY AND SOVEREIGNTY OF THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT IN SOUTH LEBANON.

IT CAME UP IN THAT KIND OF A CONTEXT.

Q. WAS THERE ANY PROMISE OF WITHDRAWAL?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I THINK IT IS CLEAR, THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT HAS SAID THAT IT ACCEPTS THAT RESOLUTION AND IS COOPERATING WITH THE UNITED NATIONS-- WITH SECRETARY GENERAL WALDHEIM'S REPRESENTATIVE IN THE AREA FOR ITS IMPLEMENTATION.

Q. YOU SAID A MINUTE AGO THAT IT IS CLEAR THAT THERE REMAIN DIFFERENCES IN APPROACHES. AND SECRETARY VANCE SAID AFTER HE FINISHED TALKING WITH DAYAN THAT "I CAN'T SAY WE HAVE REDUCED THE DIFFERENCES AT THIS POINT." SO WHAT HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED BY THIS WHOLE VISIT?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: LET ME GO BACK A MINUTE AND RECALL WHAT WE HAVE BEEN SAYING FOR SOME TIME ABOUT THIS VISIT AND WHERE IT FITS INTO THE PROCESS.

THIS IS NOT EITHER THE BEGINNING OR THE END OF THE PROCESS. IT IS OBVIOUSLY A VERY IMPORTANT STEP IN A PROCESS THAT THE PARTIES ARE ENGAGED IN AND THAT WE ARE ENGAGED IN WITH THE PARTIES.

FIRST OF ALL, I WOULD SAY THAT WE WERE ABLE TO HAVE A VERY CLEAR UNDERSTANDING AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF THE APPROACH OF THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL TO THE KEY ISSUES WHICH HAVE BEEN ALREADY TOUCHED UPON AND MENTIONED, THE APPROACH OF THE GOVERNMENT OF EGYPT, WHICH WE HAVE AGAIN REVIEWED
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PAGE 11 STATE 074861

WITH THE PRIME MINISTER, AND OUR OWN VIEWS ON THESE THINGS.

I WOULD SAY THAT THESE TALKS WERE PERHAPS AMONG THE MOST SPECIFIC AND THE MOST DETAILED THAT HAVE BEEN HELD BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND THE PRIME MINISTER ON THESE ISSUES. EACH ROUND, ONE GETS FURTHER INTO THE GUT ISSUES IN A DETAILED WAY; AND FURTHER, I THINK, ONE DEFINES WHAT REALLY ARE THE ISSUES AND ARE THE PROBLEMS THAT HAVE TO BE OVERCOME.

Q. IF I MIGHT FOLLOW THAT UP, YOU KNEW WHAT THE ISRAELI POSITION WAS THE LAST TIME YOU CAME BACK FROM JERUSALEM. PRESUMABLY, YOU ALREADY INDICATED THAT TO MR. CARTER. YOUR ANSWER SEEMS TO BE A POLITE DIPLOMATIC WAY OF SAYING THAT YOU JUST BEAT AROUND THE BUSHES AND NOTHING CAME OUT OF IT. (LAUGHTER)

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: IF YOU LOOK AT THIS AS A STATIC SORT OF SITUATION, THAT WOULD PERHAPS BE A FAIR DEDUCTION. BUT WE ARE DEALING WITH A DYNAMIC PROCESS IN WHICH EACH CONVERSATION ADDS SOMETHING TO THE ONE BEFORE. I THINK YOU HAVE TO LOOK AT IT IN TERMS OF A PROCESS. YOU CAN'T EXPECT THAT ANY ONE STEP IN THE PROCESS IS GOING TO IN SOME MAGICAL AND INSTANT WAY RESOLVE THE DIFFERENCES.

HOPEFULLY, IT WILL MOVE US FURTHER TOWARDS RESOLVING THEM, NOT IMMEDIATELY. I THINK WE SAID BEFORE THE VISIT, WE DID NOT EXPECT THAT THERE WERE GOING TO BE DRAMATIC BREAKTHROUGHS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE VISIT ITSELF. THE PRIME MINISTER HAS TO GO BACK. HE HAS TO CONSULT WITH HIS GOVERNMENT ON THE BASIS OF THE TALKS WITH THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES. THAT IS A MAJOR NEW ELEMENT.

Q. WAS THERE A CONTINUATION OF THE DISCUSSION ABOUT
ARMS--APART FROM THE AIRPLANES--THE DISCUSSION ABOUT ARMS
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PAGE 12 STATE 074861

THAT WAS BEGUN TEN DAYS AGO WITH GENERAL WEIZMAN?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: NOT IN ANY OF THE TALKS.

Q. WOULD THAT BE TAKEN UP IN THE DAYAN-VANCE TALKS?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: NO. DAYAN HAS LEFT.

Q. WAS IT THEN?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: NO. WE DID NOT TALK ABOUT THAT.
WE TALKED ABOUT THE PEACE PROCESS AND WE TALKED, AS I
SAID EARLIER, A BIT THIS AFTERNOON ABOUT LEBANON.

Q. THAT ARMS PACKAGE DISCUSSION TAKEN UP BY WEIZMAN, AND
THEN CUT SHORT WHEN HE WENT BACK, IS STILL HANGING IN THE
AIR AND THERE IS NO RESOLUTION?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: THERE WAS NO FURTHER TALK ABOUT
IT IN ANY OF THE MEETINGS THAT I WAS A PARTICIPANT IN OR
THAT I AM AWARE OF.

WHEN YOU SAY LEFT HANGING, OR WHATEVER PHRASE YOU USED,
THE FACT IS THAT THE ADMINISTRATION IS GOING TO GO
FORWARD WITH A PROPOSAL TO THE CONGRESS. WE HAVE SAID SO.

Q. DID THEY SAY HOW SOON THEY WILL WITHDRAW FROM SOUTHERN
LEBANON?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: NO. WE WERE NOT TALKING IN
TERMS OF--THAT IS SOMETHING THAT IS BEING NEGOTIATED NOW
BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL'S REPRESENTATIVE, CARRYING OUT
THE UNITED NATIONS RESOLUTION. WE THINK IT IS BETTER IF
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PAGE 13 STATE 074861

THE ACTUAL NEGOTIATIONS ON THE MODALITIES OF WITHDRAWAL
AND THE INTRODUCTION OF THE U.N. FORCES AND SO FORTH BE
CARRIED OUT BY GENERAL SILASVUO AND HIS REPRESENTATIVES IN
THE TALKS WITH BOTH THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT AND THE --

Q. IN OTHER WORDS, YOU HAVE NO PROMISES FROM THEM?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: WE HAVE AN UNDERTAKING THAT
ISRAEL ACCEPTS THE RESOLUTION CALLING FOR WITHDRAWAL AND

INTRODUCTION OF THE U.N. FORCE.

Q. MONEY MANAGER MAGAZINE YESTERDAY REPORTED THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE HAS PROVIDED CARTER WITH EVIDENCE THAT THE ISRAELIS WERE PLANNING TO INVADE SOUTHERN LEBANON ON ANY PRETEXT THEY COULD GET AND AROUND THIS TIME. IS THAT TRUE?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I HAVEN'T SEEN THE REPORT AND I AM NOT AWARE OF ANY SUCH--I AM AFRAID I AM NOT AWARE OF ANYTHING THAT WOULD SUBSTANTIATE THAT.

Q. I WOULD LIKE TO FOLLOW UP. ARE YOU SATISFIED THAT YOU ARE GETTING ADEQUATE INFORMATION ABOUT THE EXTENT OF THE DESTRUCTION OF HUMAN LIFE IN SOUTHERN LEBANON?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I THINK WE ARE GETTING QUITE ACCURATE INFORMATION ABOUT BOTH THE DESTRUCTION OF LIFE THAT TOOK PLACE IN ISRAEL IN THE TERRORIST ATTACK AND IN THE LOSS OF LIFE IN THE RAIDS IN LEBANON, AS ACCURATE AS IS AVAILABLE.

IN LEBANON, I THINK EVERYONE RECOGNIZES THAT THE FIGURES ARE STILL APPROXIMATE AND UNCERTAIN. BUT WE ARE CERTAINLY GETTING THE BEST INFORMATION WE CAN FROM WHATEVER SOURCES WE CONSIDER AUTHORITATIVE.

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PAGE 14 STATE 074861

Q. IS IT A FAIR CHARACTERIZATION TO SAY THAT AS A RESULT OF THIS MEETING THE PEACE PROCESS HAS TAKEN A STEP BACKWARD? IN THE PAST WE HAVE HAD AN ISRAELI GOVERNMENT WHICH HAS AGREED ROUGHLY WITH OUR VIEW ON 242. NOW YOU HAVE HEARD FROM THE HIGHEST LEVEL THAT THE CURRENT ISRAELI GOVERNMENT DOES NOT AGREE WITH US ON 242. WHY DOES THAT JUST PUT US IN A PLACE OF NO PROGRESS? WHY DOESN'T THAT MOVE THINGS BACK AND MAKE IT WORSE?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: THAT WAS NOT SOMETHING THAT SIMPLY BECAME APPARENT IN THESE TALKS. AS YOU KNOW, THIS IS A POSITION WHICH HAS BEEN THE POSITION OF THIS ISRAELI GOVERNMENT SINCE IT CAME INTO OFFICE. IT HAS BEEN, AS I THINK WE HAVE SAID BEFORE, AN ADDITIONAL COMPLICATING FACTOR IN THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS. BUT I WOULD NOT SAY THAT WE ARE TODAY BEHIND WHERE WE WERE BEFORE THESE TALKS BEGAN. I THINK THE TALKS HAVE MADE AN IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION TO CLARIFYING POSITIONS, FOR MAKING CLEAR WHERE WE THINK THE MOVEMENT IS REQUIRED TO MAKE PROGRESS FROM ISRAEL--JUST AS WE MADE CLEAR DURING PRESIDENT SADAT'S VISIT, AND FOLLOWED UP DURING MY TALKS THERE, WHERE WE THINK MOVEMENT IS NECESSARY ON THE EGYPTIAN SIDE.

Q. SUPPOSE THIS MAN HAD NOT BEEN ELECTED AND YITZAK RABIN WAS STILL THE PREMIER; THEN WOULD YOU BY NOW HAVE HAD A DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES? (LAUGHTER)

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I HONESTLY CANNOT ANSWER A HYPOTHETICAL QUESTION LIKE THAT.

Q. WAS THERE WORK DONE THIS AFTERNOON ON THE LANGUAGE OF A JOINT STATEMENT AT THE STATE DEPARTMENT AND WILL THAT WORK CONTINUE, WHERE AND AT WHAT LEVEL?
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PAGE 15 STATE 074861

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: WHEN YOU SAY "JOINT STATEMENT," DO YOU MEAN THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES?

Q. NO, I AM SORRY, ON A STATEMENT, A WHITE HOUSE STATEMENT. WAS THERE DISCUSSION BETWEEN THE ISRAELI DELEGATION AND AMERICAN OFFICIALS ABOUT THE LANGUAGE THAT WILL GO INTO A WHITE HOUSE STATEMENT?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: YES, FIRST OF ALL, THE STATEMENT WILL BE A U.S. GOVERNMENT STATEMENT. BUT AS A MATTER OF COURTESY--AND WE HAVE DONE THIS WITH EVERY ONE OF THE MIDDLE EASTERN VISITORS THAT HAS COME HERE--WE HAVE SHOWN WHAT WE PROPOSE TO SAY TO THE VISITOR AND HAVE ASKED FOR ANY COMMENTS. SO THERE HAS BEEN SOME DISCUSSION OF IT. WE WILL BE CONTINUING THOSE DISCUSSIONS AFTER I LEAVE THIS

BRIEFING.

Q. THIS WILL GO ON TONIGHT?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: IF WE FINISH IT TONIGHT, WE WILL HAVE A STATEMENT ON IT. I SUSPECT IT WILL PROBABLY BE TOMORROW MORNING.

Q. WAS THERE ANY DIRECT CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND THE PRIME MINISTER ON THIS 242 ISSUE? WHEN THE PRESIDENT LAID OUT HIS POSITION THAT HE THOUGHT IT APPLIED ON ALL FRONTS, DID MR. BEGIN RESPOND, "NO, IT DOESN'T?" WAS THERE A DIRECT CONFRONTATION? WHAT HAPPENED ON THAT THING IN THOSE MEETINGS? WE DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THAT.

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I HAVE TRIED TO CHARACTERIZE THE TALKS. I CERTAINLY HAVE NOT USED, AND WILL NOT USE THE WORD "CONFRONTATION." I WILL SAY THERE WAS A CLEAR
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PAGE 16 STATE 074861

EXPRESSION BY THE PRESIDENT OF OUR VIEW WITH REGARD TO OUR INTERPRETATION OF RESOLUTION 242 IN SOME DETAIL, INCLUDING A DISCUSSION OF OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE HISTORY OF THE RESOLUTION, AND PREVIOUS INTERPRETATIONS OF IT. THERE WAS AN EQUALLY DETAILED EXPLANATION BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF HIS INTERPRETATION AND OF HIS VIEWS.

Q. IS THIS TODAY?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: THIS WAS YESTERDAY AND IT WAS GONE INTO IN GREATER DETAIL TODAY.

Q. WHAT PERCENTAGE OF THE CONVERSATION IN THESE TWO SESSIONS INVOLVED 242?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I WASN'T RUNNING CLOCK IN THESE MEETINGS. I WAS TOO BUSY LISTENING. I CAN'T REALLY TELL YOU. WE SPENT QUITE A LOT OF TIME ON THIS. BUT I AM NOT GOING TO GIVE YOU A PERCENTAGE.

Q. CAN I FOLLOW UP JIM'S QUESTION? WAS IT JUST A STATEMENT ON EACH SIDE AND THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO --

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: NO, THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSION.

Q. I KNOW, BUT NO GETTING ANY CLOSER TOGETHER?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I WOULD NOT SAY THAT WE CLOSED THAT GAP.

Q. ON THE ISSUE OF 242, SINCE IT IS SUCH A BASIC POINT, HOW IS IT POSSIBLE TO BRIDGE A GAP OVER WHAT IS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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PAGE 17 STATE 074861

PRACTICALLY A THEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCE? EITHER JUDEA AND SAMARIA IS RETURNABLE OR IT IS NOT RETURNABLE AND ISRAEL SEEMS TO BE SAYING IT IS NOT RETURNABLE. HOW DO YOU BRIDGE A GAP LIKE THAT?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I DON'T WANT TO HAVE THE ISRAELI POSITION AS I UNDERSTAND IT MISREPRESENTED. IF YOU GO BACK TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S STATEMENT IN THE KNESSET IN WHICH HE STATED FIRST THAT ISRAEL ACCEPTS RESOLUTION 242 AS A BASIS FOR PEACE TREATIES, HE SAID SECONDLY, THERE ARE DIFFERING INTERPRETATIONS OF RESOLUTION 242. THEN THEY HAVE ADDED THE THIRD VERY IMPORTANT POINT; THAT WHILE THEY ARE NOT PREPARED TO ACCEPT THE INTERPRETATION THAT 242 AND THE PRINCIPLES THEREIN, AND

THE PRINCIPLE OF WITHDRAWAL IN PARTICULAR, APPLIES NECESSARILY ON ALL FRONTS OF THE CONFLICT, THEY HAVE SAID THAT IF IN THE NEGOTIATIONS ONE OF THE ARAB PARTIES WANTS TO PUT FORWARD A PROPOSAL CALLING FOR WITHDRAWAL ON THE WEST BANK, OR WHATEVER NEGOTIATION IS UNDER WAY, THEY ARE PREPARED TO DISCUSS IT; AND CERTAINLY NOT REFUSE TO DISCUSS IT. I THINK THAT IT IS IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND BASICALLY THEIR POSITION.

YOU ASK HOW ONE CAN OVERCOME THIS. OBVIOUSLY IF WE KNEW HOW TO OVERCOME IT, WE WOULD BE A LONG WAY FURTHER DOWN THE ROAD THAN WE ARE. BUT THE FACT IS IT IS SOMETHING WE HAVE DISCUSSED THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WILL GO BACK AND DISCUSS WITH HIS GOVERNMENT AND WITH HIS CONSTITUENCY. THEN WE WILL DISCUSS IT SOME MORE.

Q. HAVE YOU STRAIGHTENED OUT THAT PROMISE THAT WAS GIVEN BY THE ISRAELIS TO THE PRESIDENT IN REGARD TO THE SETTLEMENTS?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: THE QUESTION OF SETTLEMENTS WAS DISCUSSED AND THE ISRAELI POSITION WAS REITERATED AS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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PAGE 18 STATE 074861

IT HAD BEEN TO US AFTER THE ISRAELI CABINET, THE LATEST ISRAELI CABINET DECISION, ON THIS SUBJECT.

Q. ISRAEL'S TAKING THE POSITION IT DOES ON 242 FROM AN AMERICAN POINT OF VIEW--WHY IS IT IMPORTANT? WHY DOES THE UNITED STATES SEE IT AS IMPORTANT THAT ISRAEL AT THIS POINT COMMIT ITSELF TO A WITHDRAWAL FROM THE WEST BANK? WHY IS THAT IMPORTANT TO THE PEACE PROCESS?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: LET ME BE VERY PRECISE.

Q. THAT IS WHAT YOU HAVEN'T REALLY GONE INTO. WE KNOW WHAT YOU WANT THEM TO DO. BUT WE DON'T KNOW WHY.

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: FIRST, LET ME BE PRECISE ON THIS. WE ARE TALKING ABOUT THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE PRINCIPLE OF WITHDRAWAL, NOT A COMMITMENT TO WITHDRAW. WITHDRAWAL HAS TO BE PART OF A PACKAGE WHICH INCLUDES AGREEMENT ON A LOT OF THINGS BESIDES WITHDRAWAL, INCLUDING SATISFACTORY AND MUTUALLY AGREED SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS, INCLUDING AGREEMENT ON SECURE AND RECOGNIZED BORDERS, INCLUDING PEACE COMMITMENTS AND A WHOLE LOT OF OTHER THINGS. WHY IT IS IMPORTANT IS WE ARE--THIS IS NOT JUST AN EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI NEGOTIATION. THERE IS AN EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI NEGOTIATION ON QUESTIONS RELATING TO BILATERAL MATTERS. AS YOU KNOW, IN THAT NEGOTIATION ISRAEL HAS OFFERED TO WITHDRAW TO THE INTERNATIONAL BORDER AT THE END OF THE

PROCESS AND SUBJECT TO CERTAIN THINGS WHICH REMAIN UN-
RESOLVED. BUT WE ARE ALSO TRYING TO GET AGREEMENT ON A
DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES WHICH WOULD GOVERN A COMPREHEN-
SIVE SETTLEMENT. THIS BECOMES AN ISSUE IN TRYING TO GET
AGREEMENT ON A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT OR ON A SET OF
PRINCIPLES FOR A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT WHICH PRESIDENT
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PAGE 19 STATE 074861

SADAT HAS INDICATED HE CONSIDERS IMPORTANT AS A FRAMEWORK
FOR BROADENING THE BASIS FOR THE NEGOTIATIONS.

Q. WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN YOUR
INSISTENCE, THE U.S. INSISTENCE, ON THE ACCEPTANCE OF
THE PRINCIPLE OF WITHDRAWAL FROM THE WEST BANK, AND THE
ISRAELI READINESS TO DISCUSS THIS WHEN IT IS RAISED IN
THE NEGOTIATION?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: IT GOES BACK TO THE FACT THAT YOU
DON'T START NEGOTIATIONS FROM A BLANK SLATE WHEN YOU ARE
DEALING WITH THIS PROBLEM. YOU START WITH RESOLUTION 242,
WHICH IS THE FRAMEWORK FOR NEGOTIATIONS.

IT INVOLVES CERTAIN PRINCIPLES, ONE OF WHICH IS WITHDRAWAL.
THEREFORE, THE QUESTION OF WHETHER OR NOT THE PARTIES
AGREE ON WHAT THOSE PRINCIPLES MEAN BECOMES
NOT SOMETHING TO DISCUSS IN THE NEGOTIATIONS, BUT A COMMON
DENOMINATOR ON WHICH BOTH SIDES AGREE NEGOTIATIONS WILL
PROCEED. IT IS IMPORTANT FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE
ARAB PARTIES TO HAVE A COMMON INTERPREATION OF THE
APPLICABILITY OF 242 AS A STARTING POINT.

Q. COULD I ASK ABOUT THE SETTLEMENTS AGAIN? WHEN WE LAST
LEFT THIS, AS I RECALL IT, IT WAS ANNOUNCED THAT THERE
WOULD BE NO MORE SETTLEMENTS DURING THE PERIOD LEADING UP
TO AND INCLUDING MR. BEGIN'S TRIP TO WASHINGTON. NOW IN
THESE TALKS, DID THE ISRAELI SIDE GIVE ANY ASSURANCES AS
TO WHAT IT WILL DO NOW THAT THOSE TALKS ARE COMPLETED?
WHAT IS ITS FUTURE POLICY ON SETTLEMENTS?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: THEY REITERATED WHAT THEIR
PRESENT POSITION IS: NO NEW SETTLEMENTS IN THE SINAI, NO
SETTLEMENTS WITH REGARD TO ANYWHERE WHILE THE VISIT HERE
WAS GOING ON. BUT BEYOND THAT, I THINK THEIR POSITION
GOING BACK BEFORE THAT WAS THAT THERE WERE A COUPLE OF
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PAGE 20 STATE 074861

WEST BANK SETTLEMENTS WHICH HAD ALREADY BEEN APPROVED TO
GO INTO EXISTING MILITARY AREAS.

MY RECOLLECTION WAS THEY SAID AT THE TIME, THE TIME OF THEIR LAST CABINET DECISION, THAT THEY WOULD PROCEED IN THOSE TWO CASES. LET ME PUT IT THIS WAY: THERE WAS NO NEW GROUND BROKEN IN THESE TALKS ON THE SETTLEMENTS QUESTION.

Q. THEY HAVE NOT AGREED NOT TO HAVE FURTHER SETTLEMENTS IN THE WEST BANK?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: NO. I THINK THAT IS FAIR TO SAY.

Q. WILL THE UNITED STATES IN YOUR VIEW REMAIN AN EFFECTIVE MEDIATOR IF 242 IS IN EFFECT REJECTED; THE APPLICABILITY OF 242?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: YES, I THINK SO. NOBODY IS REJECTING 242. PART OF OUR JOB IS SIMPLY TRYING TO RESOLVE THAT DIFFERENCE OF INTERPRETATION ALONG WITH ALL THE OTHER DIFFERENCES THAT FLOW FROM 242. IF ANYTHING, IT MAKES THE MEDIATOR JOB EVEN MORE IMPORTANT.

Q. LET ME ASK YOU JUST ONE QUESTION. THAT IS, IN THE PRESIDENT'S INTERPRETATION OF 242, DID HE GIVE MR. BEGIN ANY IDEAS AS TO WHAT THE UNITED STATES THINKS THE EXTENT OF WITHDRAWAL SHOULD BE? WHAT DO "MINOR ADJUSTMENTS" MEAN? HOW DOES HE LOOK UPON THE FUTURE OF JERUSALEM, THINGS LIKE THAT, SPECIFICS?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: NO, WE DID NOT TALK ABOUT THOSE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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PAGE 21 STATE 074861

KINDS OF SPECIFICS. I THINK WE HAVE ALWAYS SAID THAT THE QUESTION OF MODIFICATIONS IN THE '67 BORDERS IS SOMETHING FOR NEGOTIATIONS. THAT REMAINS THE CASE.

Q. BACK ON LEBANON FOR JUST A SECOND. IF ISRAEL FEELS THAT IT NEEDS TO KEEP THE "LEBENSRAUM" UP TO THE LITANI RIVER OR IF THE WAR GETS BROADENED IN ANY OTHER FORM AND THE SYRIANS INTERVENE, IS IT YOUR VIEW THAT THE SOVIETS WILL NOT HONOR THEIR COMMITMENT TO INTERVENE ON BEHALF OF THE SYRIANS?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I THINK THAT IS A WHOLE STRING OF HYPOTHETICAL "IFS" IF I CAN SAY SO. THE ISRAELIS HAVE SAID THAT THEY ARE GOING TO COOPERATE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTION 425 WHICH MEANS THEY ARE GOING TO WITHDRAW. I THINK ALL THE OTHER "IFS" DON'T REALLY COME INTO PLAY.

I WOULD RATHER NOT HONESTLY GET INTO A CHAIN OF
SPECULATIVE ARGUMENT.

Q. IS ONE OF THE OPTIONS NOW FOR THE UNITED STATES TO
PRESENT ITS OWN PLAN FOR A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT IN
THE MIDDLE EAST?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I WOULDN'T PUT IT THAT WAY.
WE HAVE ALWAYS SAID THAT WHEN WE SEE AN OPPORTUNITY TO
SUGGEST A WAY OF BRIDGING THE GAP, WE WILL DO IT. BUT THE
QUESTION OF WHETHER OR NOT WE DO IT AND TO WHAT EXTENT
WE DO IT IS AN OPTION THAT IS OPEN, BUT IT IS NOT ONE
THAT WE HAVE MADE ANY DECISION ABOUT SO FAR.

THE PRESS: THANK YOU. VANCE

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PAGE 01 STATE 074861

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FOL RPT STATE 074861 ACTION TEL AVIV AMMAN BEIRUT CAIRO
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TEL AVIV ACKNOWLEDGE

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: BACKGROUND BRIEFING ON BEGIN'S WASHINGTON TALKS -
MARCH 22, 1978
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PAGE 02 STATE 074861

1. FOLLOWING IS THE TRANSCRIPT OF A BACKGROUND BRIEFING
GIVEN AT THE WHITE HOUSE FOR THE PRESS ATTRIBUTABLE TO
"ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS." FYI ONLY: THE OFFICIAL
WHO GAVE THE BRIEFING WAS ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON.

2. BEGIN TEXT:

THIS BRIEFING MAY BE ATTRIBUTED TO ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS

MR. POWELL: THIS BRIEFING WILL BE ON BACKGROUND. IT WILL
BE FOR ATTRIBUTION TO ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS OR OFFICIAL,
AS YOU WISH. THAT IS ALL I HAVE TO SAY.

Q. IS THERE GOING TO BE A COMMUNIQUE?

MR. POWELL: I WILL LET THE BRIEFER DEAL WITH THAT.

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: THERE WILL BE A FURTHER STATEMENT
ISSUED LATER. IT MAY WELL NOT BE UNTIL TOMORROW MORNING,

IT MIGHT BE THIS EVENING--PROBABLY TOMORROW MORNING. AND
I SUSPECT THAT IS THE MOST LIKELY TIMING.

Q. AN AMERICAN STATEMENT?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: IT WILL BE BASICALLY AN AMERICAN
STATEMENT.

Q. WHAT IS TAKING SO LONG?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: BUT THE PRESIDENT HAS ALREADY,
OF COURSE, MADE A STATEMENT TODAY IN HIS FAREWELL REMARKS
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PAGE 03 STATE 074861

TO THE PRIME MINISTER. IT WILL BE SUPPLEMENTARY TO THAT.
BUT MEANWHILE, WE THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE USEFUL TO GIVE A
LITTLE BIT OF A FILL-IN ON THE TALKS THAT HAVE TAKEN
PLACE UP UNTIL NOW.

AS YOU KNOW, THE PRESIDENT AND THE PRIME MINISTER HAD
SOME PRIVATE TIME TOGETHER LAST NIGHT. THEN THERE WAS A
MEETING IN THE CABINET ROOM THIS MORNING, WITH ADVISORS,
SENIOR ADVISORS PRESENT ON BOTH SIDES; DURING THE COURSE

OF WHICH THE PRESIDENT AND THE PRIME MINISTER REVIEWED
FOR US THE ESSENCE OF THEIR TALKS THE NIGHT BEFORE.

LET ME JUST SAY A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE TALKS TODAY AND
CHARACTERIZE THEM FOR YOU. FIRST OF ALL, THE TALKS WERE
CONDUCTED AS WE SAID YESTERDAY AND I WOULD REITERATE
TODAY, IN A SERIOUS AND CANDID WAY, IN THE SPIRIT OF THE
FRIENDSHIP THAT IS TRADITIONAL BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES.

THE TWO PRINCIPALS CONTINUED TODAY AS THEY BEGAN YESTERDAY,
REVIEWING THE WORK THAT HAS BEEN DONE ON THE DECLARATION
OF PRINCIPLES GOVERNING A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT. THIS
WAS ALSO COVERED INCONSIDERABLE DETAIL IN THE MEETINGS
THAT THE SECRETARY OF STATE HAD WITH FOREIGN MINISTER
DAYAN, BOTH YESTERDAY AFTERNOON AND IN A MEETING OF ABOUT
AN HOUR'S DURATION AFTER THE MEETING BETWEEN THE SECRETARY
AND THE PRIME MINISTER AT THE STATE DEPARTMENT THIS NOON.

THE PRESIDENT, IN THESE TALKS, REAFFIRMED THE BASIC
PRINCIPLES THAT HAVE GOVERNED THE AMERICAN MIDDLE EAST
POLICY OVER THE YEARS, REEMPHASIZING AND AFFIRMING THE
COMMITMENT OF THE UNITED STATES TO A COMPREHENSIVE JUST
AND LASTING MIDDLE EAST PEACE, WHICH, AS WE HAVE SAID
MANY TIMES, SHOULD BE EMBODIED IN PEACE TREATIES AND
SHOULD ALSO PROVIDE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NORMAL PEACE-
FUL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE PARTIES.

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PAGE 04 STATE 074861

THE PRESIDENT ALSO AGAIN REITERATED OUR VIEW THAT THE
BASIS FOR A SETTLEMENT REMAINS SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLU-
TION 242, THAT ALL OF THE PRINCIPLES OF THAT RESOLUTION
MUST BE THE BASIS FOR THE SETTLEMENT AND THAT ALL OF
THOSE PRINCIPLES MUST APPLY ON ALL FRONTS OF THE CONFLICT.

THOSE PRINCIPLES, AS I AM SURE YOU ALL WELL KNOW BY THIS
TIME, INCLUDE THE PRINCIPLE OF ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM
TERRITORIES OCCUPIED IN 1967, AND THE RIGHT OF EVERY
STATE IN THE AREA TO LIVE IN PEACE WITHIN SECURE AND
RECOGNIZED BOUNDARIES.

THE PRESIDENT ALSO REITERATED AND REAFFIRMED THAT THE
UNITED STATES REMAINS DEDICATED TO THE SECURITY OF ISRAEL,
THAT THE CLOSE TIES OF FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN OUR TWO

COUNTRIES HAVE ALWAYS BEEN, AND WILL REMAIN, A FUNDAMENTAL
POINT OF AMERICAN POLICY. AND FINALLY, THE PRESIDENT
AGAIN AFFIRMED OUR VIEW THAT THERE CAN BE NO PEACE
SETTLEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST WITHOUT A RESOLUTION OF THE
PALESTINIAN QUESTION.

WITH REGARD TO THE NEGOTIATIONS THAT HAVE BEEN UNDER WAY IN RECENT MONTHS BETWEEN EGYPT AND ISRAEL--IN WHICH WE HAVE BEEN PLAYING, RECENTLY, A MIDDLEMAN ROLE--THE PRESIDENT ELABORATED ON OUR VIEWS IN TWO PRINCIPAL RESPECTS: FIRST OF ALL, THAT WE STAND READY TO WORK IN OUR EFFORTS IN THESE NEGOTIATIONS TO ASSURE THAT THERE ARE ADEQUATE SOLUTIONS TO THE VERY REAL SECURITY PROBLEMS THAT ISRAEL WOULD FACE IN THE CONTEXT OF A PEACE SETTLEMENT INVOLVING WITHDRAWAL FROM OCCUPIED TERRITORIES.

WE HAVE EMPHASIZED OUR VIEW, AS WE HAVE IN TALKS WITH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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PAGE 05 STATE 074861

ARAB LEADERS, THAT AGREEMENTS AND PEACE TREATIES BETWEEN THE PARTIES MUST INCLUDE PROVISIONS THAT WILL PERMANENTLY PROTECT ISRAEL'S SECURITY INTERESTS.

AND SECONDLY, WITH REGARD TO THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE, THE PRESIDENT AGAIN REAFFIRMED OUR VIEWS IN THE TERMS OF THE STATEMENT THAT HE MADE WHEN HE MET WITH PRESIDENT SADAT IN ASWAN IN EARLY JANUARY OF THIS YEAR; NAMELY, THAT THERE MUST BE A RESOLUTION OF THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM IN ALL ITS ASPECTS, WHICH RECOGNIZES THE LEGITIMATE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE AND WHICH ENABLES THE PALESTINIANS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DETERMINATION OF THEIR OWN FUTURE.

IN GOING INTO SOME DETAIL ABOUT THIS ASPECT, WHICH, AS WE HAVE SAID BEFORE, IS ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT, UNRESOLVED ISSUES IN THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES, THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSION OF HOW SUCH PRINCIPLES MIGHT APPLY IN TERMS OF FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS, AND IN PARTICULAR, FUTURE INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE WEST BANK AND GAZA.

THERE WAS SOME DISCUSSION, ALSO, OF THE STATUS OF THE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN EGYPT AND ISRAEL WITH REGARD

TO THE NEGOTIATIONS THAT HAD BEEN GOING ON IN THE MILITARY COMMITTEE ON BILATERAL EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI MATTERS AND SOME REVIEW OF WAYS IN WHICH PROGRESS IN THOSE TALKS MIGHT BE MADE.

AT THE END OF THE TALKS TODAY, THE PRESIDENT AND THE PRIME MINISTER AGREED THAT THEY WOULD REMAIN IN CLOSE PERSONAL TOUCH, BOTH THROUGH THE KINDS OF DIRECT COMMUNICATIONS THAT THEY EXCHANGE FROM TIME TO TIME, AND THROUGH REGULAR DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS. AND THE PRESIDENT, OF COURSE, REAFFIRMED THAT THE UNITED STATES IS GOING TO CONTINUE TO SUPPORT AND ASSIST IN EVERY WAY THE CONTINUING EFFORTS TOWARDS A COMPREHENSIVE MIDDLE EAST
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PAGE 06 STATE 074861

SETTLEMENT.

I THINK PERHAPS THAT GIVES YOU THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE TALKS. I SUSPECT THERE MAY STILL BE SOME QUESTIONS THAT I HAVEN'T COVERED.

Q. SEVERAL TIMES IN THESE DISCUSSIONS THE LANGUAGE REGARDING GUARANTEES FOR ISRAEL, REPEATED REFERENCES TO MEASURES TO PROTECT THE SECURITY OF ISRAEL PERMANENTLY, AND SO FORTH, HAVE COME UP SEEMINGLY TO ME, UNDER A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT CONTEXT THAN IN THE PAST. IS THERE ANY U.S. IDEA TO PROVIDE A NEW FORM OF GUARANTEES? IS THERE A NEW ELEMENT IN THIS IN ANY WAY?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: NO, I WOULD NOT SAY THIS IS A NEW ELEMENT. I WOULD SAY THAT WE HAVE SIMPLY TRIED TO HIGHLIGHT THE IMPORTANCE THAT WE ATTACH AND THAT WE HAVE BEEN CONVEYING IN OUR TALKS WITH THE ARAB GOVERNMENTS, THAT WE BELIEVE THEY SHOULD ATTACH TO THIS ASPECT, TO THE SECURITY ASPECTS OF A PEACE SETTLEMENT INVOLVING VERY DIFFICULT QUESTIONS OF WITHDRAWAL.

BUT THERE HAS BEEN NO ASPECT DISCUSSED THAT HAS NOT BEEN DISCUSSED AT SOME POINT IN THE TALKS IN THE PAST.

Q. WHEN ISRAEL RESPONDED TO PRESIDENT SADAT'S INITIATIVE WITH AN OPENING PROPOSAL THAT INCLUDED GIVING BACK 99 PERCENT OF THE SINAI AND TAKING UP VARIOUS OTHER MEASURES, THE UNITED STATES, VARIOUS OFFICIALS, WELCOMED THIS, CALLED IT CONSTRUCTIVE, NOTABLE, FAR-REACHING AND MR. BEGIN REMINDED US ALL OF THOSE DESCRIPTIONS OUT THERE TODAY.

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PAGE 07 STATE 074861

IS THE UNITED STATES WITHDRAWING ITS POSITIVE REACTION TO THOSE ISRAELI PROPOSALS AT THIS POINT? HAVE YOU CHANGED YOUR MIND ABOUT THEM?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: OUR REACTION WAS STATED AT THE TIME. LET ME ONLY SAY THAT WE AGAIN HAVE MADE CLEAR THAT WE CONSIDER THAT THE PROPOSALS THAT ISRAEL HAS MADE IN THE CONTEXT OF PRESIDENT SADAT'S PEACE INITIATIVE ARE, IN OUR VIEW, A GOOD STARTING POINT FOR NEGOTIATIONS, A FAIR BASIS FOR NEGOTIATIONS.

THEY ARE NOT IN THEMSELVES, OBVIOUSLY, THE FINAL ANSWER. I THINK ISRAEL ITSELF RECOGNIZED THIS WHEN IT SAID THAT

IT WELCOMED COUNTERPROPOSALS TO THESE PROPOSALS.

Q. CAN YOU SAY WHAT HAPPENS NEXT? ARE YOU GOING BACK TO THE AREA? IS THERE GOING TO BE A REVIEW HERE IN WASHINGTON FIRST? AND WHAT IS THE STATE OF RELATIONS NOW BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND ISRAEL? IS THERE A DEADLOCK? IS THERE A CRISIS? HOW DO YOU DESCRIBE IT?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I WOULD CERTAINLY NOT SAY CRISIS. I THINK IT IS CLEAR THAT THERE REMAIN DIFFERENCES IN APPROACHES TO SOME OF THE FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES IN THE NEGOTIATIONS.

AS TO HOW WE PROCEED FROM HERE, THERE WILL BE, IN THE FIRST INSTANCE, CONSULTATIONS AMONG OURSELVES TO TAKE STOCK NOW OF WHERE WE ARE AT THE END OF THESE TALKS. THERE WILL HAVE TO BE CONSULTATIONS WITH THE OTHER PRINCIPAL PARTY TO THE NEGOTIATIONS, NAMELY, THE GOVERNMENT OF EGYPT, AND CONTINUING CONSULTATIONS AS WELL THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL.

OUT OF THIS FOLLOW-ON PROCESS OF CONSULTATIONS WE EXPECT WILL COME DECISIONS ABOUT THE MOST PRACTICAL AND EFFECTIVE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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PAGE 08 STATE 074861

WAY TO PROCEED, BUT NO PRECISE DECISIONS HAVE BEEN MADE AT THE PRESENT TIME ABOUT WHAT THOSE STEPS MIGHT BE.

Q. I JUST WANTED TO FIND OUT IF PRIME MINISTER BEGIN HERE REPEATED WHAT AN ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL SAID A WEEK OR SO AGO, HAD BEEN TOLD TO A SHUTTLING ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL; THAT HE IN FACT DID NOT BELIEVE THAT 242 APPLIES TO THE WEST BANK.

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: THIS REMAINS, I THINK, CLEARLY ONE OF THE POINTS OF DIFFERENCE THAT REMAINS TO BE OVERCOME, THE INTERPRETATION OF THE APPLICABILITY OF THE PRINCIPLE OF WITHDRAWAL, AS WELL AS THE OTHER PRINCIPLES OF RESOLUTION 242, TO THE WEST BANK.

Q. COULD YOU TELL US WHAT THE ISRAELI POSITION IS ON IT, AS YOU UNDERSTAND IT?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I THINK THAT IT IS BETTER, FRANKLY, TO GET THAT FROM THE ISRAELIS. I THINK THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE STATEMENT MADE OF THAT IS THE ONE THAT DAYAN MADE IN THE KNESSET NOT TOO LONG BEFORE THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT HERE.

Q. ARE YOU STILL GOING BACK TO THE MIDDLE EAST ON THE 1ST OF APRIL?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I NEVER HAD A PLAN TO GO BACK ON THE 1ST OF APRIL. THAT IS APRIL FOOL'S DAY. I DON'T KNOW HOW THAT GOT AROUND. I FULLY EXPECT THAT AT SOME POINT AS PART OF THE PROCESS, WHICH GOES ON IN A NUMBER OF WAYS IN A NUMBER OF LEVELS, THAT IT WILL GO ON AT MY LEVEL AND THAT I WILL AT SOME POINT GO BACK. BUT THERE
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PAGE 09 STATE 074861

IS NO DECISION MADE AT THE PRESENT TIME ABOUT WHEN.

Q. DIDN'T THE WAR IN LEBANON COME UP AT ALL, THE INVASION, THE MASSIVE INVASION, USE OF AMERICAN PLANES AND EQUIPMENT TO ATTACK ANOTHER COUNTRY?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: THE SITUATION IN LEBANON DID NOT COME UP IN THE TALKS BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE PRESIDENT TODAY. IT WAS DISCUSSED BETWEEN THE SECRETARY AND THE PRIME MINISTER DURING THEIR FOLLOW-ON MEETING. THERE WAS SOME DISCUSSION OF THE SITUATION IN LEBANON. IT WAS FOCUSED MOSTLY ON SIMPLY A REVIEW OF THE STATUS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LATEST SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS WITH REGARD TO ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL AND THE INTRODUCTION OF UNITED NATIONS FORCES AND THE RESTORATION OF THE AUTHORITY AND SOVEREIGNTY OF THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT IN SOUTH LEBANON.

IT CAME UP IN THAT KIND OF A CONTEXT.

Q. WAS THERE ANY PROMISE OF WITHDRAWAL?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I THINK IT IS CLEAR, THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT HAS SAID THAT IT ACCEPTS THAT RESOLUTION AND IS COOPERATING WITH THE UNITED NATIONS-- WITH SECRETARY GENERAL WALDHEIM'S REPRESENTATIVE IN THE AREA FOR ITS IMPLEMENTATION.

Q. YOU SAID A MINUTE AGO THAT IT IS CLEAR THAT THERE REMAIN DIFFERENCES IN APPROACHES. AND SECRETARY VANCE SAID AFTER HE FINISHED TALKING WITH DAYAN THAT "I CAN'T SAY WE HAVE REDUCED THE DIFFERENCES AT THIS POINT." SO WHAT HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED BY THIS WHOLE VISIT?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: LET ME GO BACK A MINUTE AND RECALL WHAT WE HAVE BEEN SAYING FOR SOME TIME ABOUT THIS
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PAGE 10 STATE 074861

VISIT AND WHERE IT FITS INTO THE PROCESS.

THIS IS NOT EITHER THE BEGINNING OR THE END OF THE PROCESS. IT IS OBVIOUSLY A VERY IMPORTANT STEP IN A PROCESS THAT THE PARTIES ARE ENGAGED IN AND THAT WE ARE ENGAGED IN WITH THE PARTIES.

FIRST OF ALL, I WOULD SAY THAT WE WERE ABLE TO HAVE A VERY CLEAR UNDERSTANDING AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF THE APPROACH OF THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL TO THE KEY ISSUES WHICH HAVE BEEN ALREADY TOUCHED UPON AND MENTIONED, THE APPROACH OF THE GOVERNMENT OF EGYPT, WHICH WE HAVE AGAIN REVIEWED WITH THE PRIME MINISTER, AND OUR OWN VIEWS ON THESE THINGS.

I WOULD SAY THAT THESE TALKS WERE PERHAPS AMONG THE MOST SPECIFIC AND THE MOST DETAILED THAT HAVE BEEN HELD BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND THE PRIME MINISTER ON THESE ISSUES. EACH ROUND, ONE GETS FURTHER INTO THE GUT ISSUES IN A DETAILED WAY; AND FURTHER, I THINK, ONE DEFINES WHAT REALLY ARE THE ISSUES AND ARE THE PROBLEMS THAT HAVE TO BE OVERCOME.

Q. IF I MIGHT FOLLOW THAT UP, YOU KNEW WHAT THE ISRAELI POSITION WAS THE LAST TIME YOU CAME BACK FROM JERUSALEM. PRESUMABLY, YOU ALREADY INDICATED THAT TO MR. CARTER. YOUR ANSWER SEEMS TO BE A POLITE DIPLOMATIC WAY OF SAYING THAT YOU JUST BEAT AROUND THE BUSHES AND NOTHING CAME OUT OF IT. (LAUGHTER)

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: IF YOU LOOK AT THIS AS A STATIC SORT OF SITUATION, THAT WOULD PERHAPS BE A FAIR DEDUCTION. BUT WE ARE DEALING WITH A DYNAMIC PROCESS IN WHICH EACH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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PAGE 11 STATE 074861

CONVERSATION ADDS SOMETHING TO THE ONE BEFORE. I THINK YOU HAVE TO LOOK AT IT IN TERMS OF A PROCESS. YOU CAN'T EXPECT THAT ANY ONE STEP IN THE PROCESS IS GOING TO IN SOME MAGICAL AND INSTANT WAY RESOLVE THE DIFFERENCES.

HOPEFULLY, IT WILL MOVE US FURTHER TOWARDS RESOLVING THEM, NOT IMMEDIATELY. I THINK WE SAID BEFORE THE VISIT, WE DID NOT EXPECT THAT THERE WERE GOING TO BE DRAMATIC BREAKTHROUGHS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE VISIT ITSELF. THE PRIME MINISTER HAS TO GO BACK. HE HAS TO CONSULT WITH HIS GOVERNMENT ON THE BASIS OF THE TALKS WITH THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES. THAT IS A MAJOR NEW ELEMENT.

Q. WAS THERE A CONTINUATION OF THE DISCUSSION ABOUT ARMS--APART FROM THE AIRPLANES--THE DISCUSSION ABOUT ARMS THAT WAS BEGUN TEN DAYS AGO WITH GENERAL WEIZMAN?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: NOT IN ANY OF THE TALKS.

Q. WOULD THAT BE TAKEN UP IN THE DAYAN-VANCE TALKS?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: NO. DAYAN HAS LEFT.

Q. WAS IT THEN?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: NO. WE DID NOT TALK ABOUT THAT. WE TALKED ABOUT THE PEACE PROCESS AND WE TALKED, AS I SAID EARLIER, A BIT THIS AFTERNOON ABOUT LEBANON.

Q. THAT ARMS PACKAGE DISCUSSION TAKEN UP BY WEIZMAN, AND THEN CUT SHORT WHEN HE WENT BACK, IS STILL HANGING IN THE AIR AND THERE IS NO RESOLUTION?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: THERE WAS NO FURTHER TALK ABOUT IT IN ANY OF THE MEETINGS THAT I WAS A PARTICIPANT IN OR THAT I AM AWARE OF.
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PAGE 12 STATE 074861

WHEN YOU SAY LEFT HANGING, OR WHATEVER PHRASE YOU USED, THE FACT IS THAT THE ADMINISTRATION IS GOING TO GO FORWARD WITH A PROPOSAL TO THE CONGRESS. WE HAVE SAID SO.

Q. DID THEY SAY HOW SOON THEY WILL WITHDRAW FROM SOUTHERN LEBANON?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: NO. WE WERE NOT TALKING IN TERMS OF--THAT IS SOMETHING THAT IS BEING NEGOTIATED NOW BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL'S REPRESENTATIVE, CARRYING OUT THE UNITED NATIONS RESOLUTION. WE THINK IT IS BETTER IF THE ACTUAL NEGOTIATIONS ON THE MODALITIES OF WITHDRAWAL AND THE INTRODUCTION OF THE U.N. FORCES AND SO FORTH BE CARRIED OUT BY GENERAL SILASVUO AND HIS REPRESENTATIVES IN THE TALKS WITH BOTH THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT AND THE --

Q. IN OTHER WORDS, YOU HAVE NO PROMISES FROM THEM?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: WE HAVE AN UNDERTAKING THAT ISRAEL ACCEPTS THE RESOLUTION CALLING FOR WITHDRAWAL AND INTRODUCTION OF THE U.N. FORCE.

Q. MONEY MANAGER MAGAZINE YESTERDAY REPORTED THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE HAS PROVIDED CARTER WITH EVIDENCE THAT THE ISRAELIS WERE PLANNING TO INVADE SOUTHERN LEBANON ON ANY PRETEXT THEY COULD GET AND AROUND THIS TIME. IS THAT TRUE?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I HAVEN'T SEEN THE REPORT AND I AM NOT AWARE OF ANY SUCH--I AM AFRAID I AM NOT AWARE OF

ANYTHING THAT WOULD SUBSTANTIATE THAT.

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PAGE 13 STATE 074861

Q. I WOULD LIKE TO FOLLOW UP. ARE YOU SATISFIED THAT YOU ARE GETTING ADEQUATE INFORMATION ABOUT THE EXTENT OF THE DESTRUCTION OF HUMAN LIFE IN SOUTHERN LEBANON?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I THINK WE ARE GETTING QUITE ACCURATE INFORMATION ABOUT BOTH THE DESTRUCTION OF LIFE THAT TOOK PLACE IN ISRAEL IN THE TERRORIST ATTACK AND IN THE LOSS OF LIFE IN THE RAIDS IN LEBANON, AS ACCURATE AS IS AVAILABLE.

IN LEBANON, I THINK EVERYONE RECOGNIZES THAT THE FIGURES ARE STILL APPROXIMATE AND UNCERTAIN. BUT WE ARE CERTAINLY GETTING THE BEST INFORMATION WE CAN FROM WHATEVER SOURCES WE CONSIDER AUTHORITATIVE.

Q. IS IT A FAIR CHARACTERIZATION TO SAY THAT AS A RESULT OF THIS MEETING THE PEACE PROCESS HAS TAKEN A STEP BACKWARD? IN THE PAST WE HAVE HAD AN ISRAELI GOVERNMENT WHICH HAS AGREED ROUGHLY WITH OUR VIEW ON 242. NOW YOU HAVE HEARD FROM THE HIGHEST LEVEL THAT THE CURRENT ISRAELI GOVERNMENT DOES NOT AGREE WITH US ON 242. WHY DOES THAT JUST PUT US IN A PLACE OF NO PROGRESS? WHY DOESN'T THAT MOVE THINGS BACK AND MAKE IT WORSE?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: THAT WAS NOT SOMETHING THAT SIMPLY BECAME APPARENT IN THESE TALKS. AS YOU KNOW, THIS IS A POSITION WHICH HAS BEEN THE POSITION OF THIS ISRAELI GOVERNMENT SINCE IT CAME INTO OFFICE. IT HAS BEEN, AS I THINK WE HAVE SAID BEFORE, AN ADDITIONAL COMPLICATING FACTOR IN THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS. BUT I WOULD NOT SAY THAT WE ARE TODAY BEHIND WHERE WE WERE BEFORE THESE TALKS BEGAN. I THINK THE TALKS HAVE MADE AN IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION TO CLARIFYING POSITIONS, FOR MAKING CLEAR WHERE WE THINK THE MOVEMENT IS REQUIRED TO MAKE PROGRESS FROM ISRAEL--JUST AS WE MADE CLEAR DURING PRESIDENT SADAT'S VISIT, AND FOLLOWED UP DURING MY TALKS THERE, WHERE WE
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PAGE 14 STATE 074861

THINK MOVEMENT IS NECESSARY ON THE EGYPTIAN SIOE.

Q. SUPPOSE THIS MAN HAD NOT BEEN ELECTED AND YITZAK RABIN WAS STILL THE PREMIER; THEN WOULD YOU BY NOW HAVE HAD A DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES? (LAUGHTER)

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I HONESTLY CANNOT ANSWER A
HYPOTHETICAL QUESTION LIKE THAT.

Q. WAS THERE WORK DONE THIS AFTERNOON ON THE LANGUAGE
OF A JOINT STATEMENT AT THE STATE DEPARTMENT AND WILL THAT
WORK CONTINUE, WHERE AND AT WHAT LEVEL?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: WHEN YOU SAY "JOINT STATEMENT,"
DO YOU MEAN THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES?

Q. NO, I AM SORRY, ON A STATEMENT, A WHITE HOUSE STATE-
MENT. WAS THERE DISCUSSION BETWEEN THE ISRAELI DELEGATION
AND AMERICAN OFFICIALS ABOUT THE LANGUAGE THAT WILL GO
INTO A WHITE HOUSE STATEMENT?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: YES, FIRST OF ALL, THE STATEMENT
WILL BE A U.S. GOVERNMENT STATEMENT. BUT AS A MATTER OF
COURTESY--AND WE HAVE DONE THIS WITH EVERY ONE OF THE
MIDDLE EASTERN VISITORS THAT HAS COME HERE--WE HAVE SHOWN
WHAT WE PROPOSE TO SAY TO THE VISITOR AND HAVE ASKED FOR
ANY COMMENTS. SO THERE HAS BEEN SOME DISCUSSION OF IT.
WE WILL BE CONTINUING THOSE DISCUSSIONS AFTER I LEAVE THIS

BRIEFING.

Q. THIS WILL GO ON TONIGHT?

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PAGE 15 STATE 074861

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: IF WE FINISH IT TONIGHT, WE WILL
HAVE A STATEMENT ON IT. I SUSPECT IT WILL PROBABLY BE
TOMORROW MORNING.

Q. WAS THERE ANY DIRECT CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE
PRESIDENT AND THE PRIME MINISTER ON THIS 242 ISSUE?
WHEN THE PRESIDENT LAID OUT HIS POSITION THAT HE THOUGHT
IT APPLIED ON ALL FRONTS, DID MR. BEGIN RESPOND, "NO, IT
DOESN'T?" WAS THERE A DIRECT CONFRONTATION? WHAT
HAPPENED ON THAT THING IN THOSE MEETINGS? WE DON'T KNOW
ANYTHING ABOUT THAT.

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I HAVE TRIED TO CHARACTERIZE
THE TALKS. I CERTAINLY HAVE NOT USED, AND WILL NOT USE
THE WORD "CONFRONTATION." I WILL SAY THERE WAS A CLEAR
EXPRESSION BY THE PRESIDENT OF OUR VIEW WITH REGARD TO OUR
INTERPRETATION OF RESOLUTION 242 IN SOME DETAIL, INCLUDING
A DISCUSSION OF OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE HISTORY OF THE
RESOLUTION, AND PREVIOUS INTERPRETATIONS OF IT. THERE
WAS AN EQUALLY DETAILED EXPLANATION BY THE PRIME MINISTER
OF HIS INTERPRETATION AND OF HIS VIEWS.

Q. IS THIS TODAY?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: THIS WAS YESTERDAY AND IT WAS GONE INTO IN GREATER DETAIL TODAY.

Q. WHAT PERCENTAGE OF THE CONVERSATION IN THESE TWO SESSIONS INVOLVED 242?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I WASN'T RUNNING CLOCK IN THESE MEETINGS. I WAS TOO BUSY LISTENING. I CAN'T REALLY TELL YOU. WE SPENT QUITE A LOT OF TIME ON THIS. BUT I AM NOT GOING TO GIVE YOU A PERCENTAGE.

Q. CAN I FOLLOW UP JIM'S QUESTION? WAS IT JUST A STATE-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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PAGE 16 STATE 074861

MENT ON EACH SIDE AND THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO --

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: NO, THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSION.

Q. I KNOW, BUT NO GETTING ANY CLOSER TOGETHER?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I WOULD NOT SAY THAT WE CLOSED THAT GAP.

Q. ON THE ISSUE OF 242, SINCE IT IS SUCH A BASIC POINT, HOW IS IT POSSIBLE TO BRIDGE A GAP OVER WHAT IS PRACTICALLY A THEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCE? EITHER JUDEA AND SAMARIA IS RETURNABLE OR IT IS NOT RETURNABLE AND ISRAEL SEEMS TO BE SAYING IT IS NOT RETURNABLE. HOW DO YOU BRIDGE A GAP LIKE THAT?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I DON'T WANT TO HAVE THE ISRAELI POSITION AS I UNDERSTAND IT MISREPRESENTED. IF YOU GO BACK TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S STATEMENT IN THE KNESSET IN WHICH HE STATED FIRST THAT ISRAEL ACCEPTS RESOLUTION 242 AS A BASIS FOR PEACE TREATIES, HE SAID SECONDLY, THERE ARE DIFFERING INTERPRETATIONS OF RESOLUTION 242. THEN THEY HAVE ADDED THE THIRD VERY IMPORTANT POINT; THAT WHILE THEY ARE NOT PREPARED TO ACCEPT THE INTERPRETATION THAT 242 AND THE PRINCIPLES THEREIN, AND THE PRINCIPLE OF WITHDRAWAL IN PARTICULAR, APPLIES NECESSARILY ON ALL FRONTS OF THE CONFLICT, THEY HAVE SAID THAT IF IN THE NEGOTIATIONS ONE OF THE ARAB PARTIES WANTS TO PUT FORWARD A PROPOSAL CALLING FOR WITHDRAWAL ON THE WEST BANK, OR WHATEVER NEGOTIATION IS UNDER WAY, THEY ARE PREPARED TO DISCUSS IT; AND CERTAINLY NOT REFUSE TO DISCUSS IT. I THINK THAT IT IS IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND
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PAGE 17 STATE 074861

BASICALLY THEIR POSITION.

YOU ASK HOW ONE CAN OVERCOME THIS. OBVIOUSLY IF WE KNEW HOW TO OVERCOME IT, WE WOULD BE A LONG WAY FURTHER DOWN THE ROAD THAN WE ARE. BUT THE FACT IS IT IS SOMETHING WE HAVE DISCUSSED THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WILL GO BACK AND DISCUSS WITH HIS GOVERNMENT AND WITH HIS CONSTITUENCY. THEN WE WILL DISCUSS IT SOME MORE.

Q. HAVE YOU STRAIGHTENED OUT THAT PROMISE THAT WAS GIVEN BY THE ISRAELIS TO THE PRESIDENT IN REGARD TO THE SETTLEMENTS?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: THE QUESTION OF SETTLEMENTS WAS DISCUSSED AND THE ISRAELI POSITION WAS REITERATED AS IT HAD BEEN TO US AFTER THE ISRAELI CABINET, THE LATEST ISRAELI CABINET DECISION, ON THIS SUBJECT.

Q. ISRAEL'S TAKING THE POSITION IT DOES ON 242 FROM AN AMERICAN POINT OF VIEW--WHY IS IT IMPORTANT? WHY DOES THE UNITED STATES SEE IT AS IMPORTANT THAT ISRAEL AT THIS POINT COMMIT ITSELF TO A WITHDRAWAL FROM THE WEST BANK? WHY IS THAT IMPORTANT TO THE PEACE PROCESS?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: LET ME BE VERY PRECISE.

Q. THAT IS WHAT YOU HAVEN'T REALLY GONE INTO. WE KNOW WHAT YOU WANT THEM TO DO. BUT WE DON'T KNOW WHY.

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: FIRST, LET ME BE PRECISE ON THIS. WE ARE TALKING ABOUT THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE PRINCIPLE OF WITHDRAWAL, NOT A COMMITMENT TO WITHDRAW. WITHDRAWAL HAS TO BE PART OF A PACKAGE WHICH INCLUDES AGREEMENT ON A LOT OF THINGS BESIDES WITHDRAWAL, INCLUDING SATISFACTORY AND MUTUALLY AGREED SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS, INCLUDING AGREEMENT ON SECURE AND RECOGNIZED BORDERS, INCLUDING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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PAGE 18 STATE 074861

PEACE COMMITMENTS AND A WHOLE LOT OF OTHER THINGS. WHY IT IS IMPORTANT IS WE ARE--THIS IS NOT JUST AN EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI NEGOTIATION. THERE IS AN EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI NEGOTIATION ON QUESTIONS RELATING TO BILATERAL MATTERS. AS YOU KNOW, IN THAT NEGOTIATION ISRAEL HAS OFFERED TO WITHDRAW TO THE INTERNATIONAL BORDER AT THE END OF THE PROCESS AND SUBJECT TO CERTAIN THINGS WHICH REMAIN UNRESOLVED. BUT WE ARE ALSO TRYING TO GET AGREEMENT ON A DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES WHICH WOULD GOVERN A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT. THIS BECOMES AN ISSUE IN TRYING TO GET

AGREEMENT ON A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT OR ON A SET OF PRINCIPLES FOR A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT WHICH PRESIDENT SADAT HAS INDICATED HE CONSIDERS IMPORTANT AS A FRAMEWORK FOR BROADENING THE BASIS FOR THE NEGOTIATIONS.

Q. WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN YOUR INSISTENCE, THE U.S. INSISTENCE, ON THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE PRINCIPLE OF WITHDRAWAL FROM THE WEST BANK, AND THE ISRAELI READINESS TO DISCUSS THIS WHEN IT IS RAISED IN THE NEGOTIATION?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: IT GOES BACK TO THE FACT THAT YOU DON'T START NEGOTIATIONS FROM A BLANK SLATE WHEN YOU ARE DEALING WITH THIS PROBLEM. YOU START WITH RESOLUTION 242, WHICH IS THE FRAMEWORK FOR NEGOTIATIONS.

IT INVOLVES CERTAIN PRINCIPLES, ONE OF WHICH IS WITHDRAWAL. THEREFORE, THE QUESTION OF WHETHER OR NOT THE PARTIES AGREE ON WHAT THOSE PRINCIPLES MEAN BECOMES NOT SOMETHING TO DISCUSS IN THE NEGOTIATIONS, BUT A COMMON DENOMINATOR ON WHICH BOTH SIDES AGREE NEGOTIATIONS WILL PROCEED. IT IS IMPORTANT FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE ARAB PARTIES TO HAVE A COMMON INTERPREATION OF THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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PAGE 19 STATE 074861

APPLICABILITY OF 242 AS A STARTING POINT.

Q. COULD I ASK ABOUT THE SETTLEMENTS AGAIN? WHEN WE LAST LEFT THIS, AS I RECALL IT, IT WAS ANNOUNCED THAT THERE WOULD BE NO MORE SETTLEMENTS DURING THE PERIOD LEADING UP TO AND INCLUDING MR. BEGIN'S TRIP TO WASHINGTON. NOW IN THESE TALKS, DID THE ISRAELI SIDE GIVE ANY ASSURANCES AS TO WHAT IT WILL DO NOW THAT THOSE TALKS ARE COMPLETED? WHAT IS ITS FUTURE POLICY ON SETTLEMENTS?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: THEY REITERATED WHAT THEIR PRESENT POSITION IS: NO NEW SETTLEMENTS IN THE SINAI, NO SETTLEMENTS WITH REGARD TO ANYWHERE WHILE THE VISIT HERE WAS GOING ON. BUT BEYOND THAT, I THINK THEIR POSITION GOING BACK BEFORE THAT WAS THAT THERE WERE A COUPLE OF WEST BANK SETTLEMENTS WHICH HAD ALREADY BEEN APPROVED TO GO INTO EXISTING MILITARY AREAS.

MY RECOLLECTION WAS THEY SAID AT THE TIME, THE TIME OF THEIR LAST CABINET DECISION, THAT THEY WOULD PROCEED IN THOSE TWO CASES. LET ME PUT IT THIS WAY: THERE WAS NO NEW GROUND BROKEN IN THESE TALKS ON THE SETTLEMENTS QUESTION.

Q. THEY HAVE NOT AGREED NOT TO HAVE FURTHER SETTLEMENTS IN THE WEST BANK?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: NO. I THINK THAT IS FAIR TO SAY.

Q. WILL THE UNITED STATES IN YOUR VIEW REMAIN AN EFFECTIVE MEDIATOR IF 242 IS IN EFFECT REJECTED; THE APPLICABILITY OF 242?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: YES, I THINK SO. NOBODY IS REJECTING 242. PART OF OUR JOB IS SIMPLY TRYING TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 20 STATE 074861

RESOLVE THAT DIFFERENCE OF INTERPRETATION ALONG WITH ALL THE OTHER DIFFERENCES THAT FLOW FROM 242. IF ANYTHING, IT MAKES THE MEDIATOR JOB EVEN MORE IMPORTANT.

Q. LET ME ASK YOU JUST ONE QUESTION. THAT IS, IN THE PRESIDENT'S INTERPRETATION OF 242, DID HE GIVE MR. BEGIN ANY IDEAS AS TO WHAT THE UNITED STATES THINKS THE EXTENT OF WITHDRAWAL SHOULD BE? WHAT DO "MINOR ADJUSTMENTS" MEAN? HOW DOES HE LOOK UPON THE FUTURE OF JERUSALEM, THINGS LIKE THAT, SPECIFICS?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: NO, WE DID NOT TALK ABOUT THOSE KINDS OF SPECIFICS. I THINK WE HAVE ALWAYS SAID THAT THE QUESTION OF MODIFICATIONS IN THE '67 BORDERS IS SOMETHING FOR NEGOTIATIONS. THAT REMAINS THE CASE.

Q. BACK ON LEBANON FOR JUST A SECOND. IF ISRAEL FEELS THAT IT NEEDS TO KEEP THE "LEBENSRAUM" UP TO THE LITANI RIVER OR IF THE WAR GETS BROADENED IN ANY OTHER FORM AND THE SYRIANS INTERVENE, IS IT YOUR VIEW THAT THE SOVIETS WILL NOT HONOR THEIR COMMITMENT TO INTERVENE ON BEHALF OF THE SYRIANS?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I THINK THAT IS A WHOLE STRING OF HYPOTHETICAL "IFS" IF I CAN SAY SO. THE ISRAELIS HAVE SAID THAT THEY ARE GOING TO COOPERATE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTION 425 WHICH MEANS THEY ARE GOING TO WITHDRAW. I THINK ALL THE OTHER "IFS" DON'T REALLY COME INTO PLAY.

I WOULD RATHER NOT HONESTLY GET INTO A CHAIN OF SPECULATIVE ARGUMENT.

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PAGE 21 STATE 074861

Q. IS ONE OF THE OPTIONS NOW FOR THE UNITED STATES TO

PRESENT ITS OWN PLAN FOR A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT IN
THE MIDDLE EAST?

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I WOULDN'T PUT IT THAT WAY.
WE HAVE ALWAYS SAID THAT WHEN WE SEE AN OPPORTUNITY TO
SUGGEST A WAY OF BRIDGING THE GAP, WE WILL DO IT. BUT THE
QUESTION OF WHETHER OR NOT WE DO IT AND TO WHAT EXTENT
WE DO IT IS AN OPTION THAT IS OPEN, BUT IT IS NOT ONE
THAT WE HAVE MADE ANY DECISION ABOUT SO FAR.

THE PRESS: THANK YOU. VANCE
UNQUOTE VANCE

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